Statement

Year of recruitment	No. of ITS officers recruited
1979	90
1980	60
1981	100
1982	118
1983	150
1984	150
1985	150
1986	150
1987	175
1988	81
1989	135
1990	136
1991	120
1992	155
1993	99

Extinction of Gharial

4522. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gharial is one among the 600 species of animals and birds facing extinction in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the number of gharials, which was 143 during 1974-77, came down to 60-70 in the year 1982.

(c) if so, their number at present; and

(d) whether Government propose to take any measures to protect this species from extinction and its commercial farming for earning foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Although Gharial (Gavialis gangeticus) it categorised as an endangered species, it is not facing the threat of extinction at present.

(b) and (c) No. Sir. The estimated population of Gharial during 1970 was 75 but in the 1980's their number increased to about 500 distributed in major rivers of U.P., M.P., Orissa and Assam. According to a report of Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun in 1993 the population of Gharials was estimated at about 1500 in the wild and over 450 is captivity.

(d) The Gharial is included under Schedule I Part II of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby receiving highest legal protection under the Act It is also covered by Appendix I of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) which prohibits international trade in the species and its products. There are four centres in the country where breeding of gharials take place for rehabilitation into their natural habitats. Over 3,500 gharials have been released in natural waters so far. There is no proposal for commercial forming of the species for earning foreign exchange.

Loss of forest land

4523. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 1.3 million acres of forest cover is being lost every year in India, despite Central Government's allocation of funds for Wasteland development every year, as reported in the Hindustan Times dated the 10th March, 1995.

(b) whether it is also a fact that due to deforestation, India's flood prone areas increased from 55.6 million acres in the late 1960s, to 130 million acres by the end of the 80s;